



September 12, 2000

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Ms. Magalie Roman Salas
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Ultra-Wideband, ET Docket 98-153

Dear Ms. Salas:

The Rainbow/PUSH Coalition ("Rainbow/PUSH") supports the Ultra-Wideband technology as a means to bridge the digital divide. Rainbow/PUSH has been a strong proponent of initiatives to close the "digital divide" between underserved communities and the rest of society.

The Rainbow/PUSH Coalition is a progressive, multiracial, international organization working to promote social, racial and economic justice. In the area of technology, our *Silicon Valley "DIGITAL CONNECTIONS"* initiative focuses on building "digital connections" and partnerships to transform the digital divide into digital opportunities for all communities. This initiative is aimed at ensuring full access to computers and the Internet in schools, libraries, and communities, and partnerships to design the technical support, teacher training and curriculum needed for effective digital schools and communities. It is important that disadvantaged children have every opportunity to learn the technical skills necessary to compete in today's career marketplace without being left behind.

To accomplish this task, Rainbow/PUSH believes that Ultra-Wideband technology (UWB) has the possibility of bringing so called "fat" broadband pipes to areas that are underserved due to the age and state of the existing infrastructure. Wirelessly connecting outdated buildings is one of the fastest and most economical ways to bring them into the connectivity mode. This would allow an upgrade of the in-building physical plant to support local area networking. The vast throughput of UWB at such a low power transmission makes the implementation of this revolutionary technology an ideal solution.

A prime example is found in the urgent need to connect schools and libraries to the Internet. The e-rate program, which Rainbow/PUSH has endorsed, allows communities with high proportions of children from low-income families to receive subsidized connections for school and library Internet service. However, it is still the responsibility of the hard-pressed local school and library system to

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complete the connection from the telephone drops to the computers in the classrooms and library carrels. These costs are especially high in the inner city and rural areas, whose antiquated school and library buildings cannot be rewired inexpensively. UWB technology solves this "last mile" problem by enabling a high-speed (e.g. DSL) connection to a school or library to be connected wirelessly to each classroom's or reading room's computer. Moreover, this can be done quickly and inexpensively under Part 5 of the Rules. Thus, UWB would be of significant assistance in bridging the digital divide.

Much of the value of the Internet is increased by its ubiquity. This is driven by the belief and understanding that everyone benefits from the empowerment of anyone. Although the communications applications of UWB are certainly interesting, it is the aforementioned applications that I am focused on. Therefore, I encourage the Commission to act on the proposed rulemaking with due speed.

Rainbow/PUSH's interest in this proceeding is see that the digital divide is transformed into digital opportunities, to see that digital connections are created so that people and communities of color can achieve full participation and are included in the new digital economy. I hope that the Commission will act on this promising new technology quickly and in a manner that will allow the technology to perform its intended goals.

Sincerely,

Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.
President & Founder

cc: The Hon. William Kennard, Chairman
 The Hon. Gloria Tristani, Commissioner
 The Hon. Susan Ness, Commissioner
 The Hon. Michael Powell, Commissioner
 The Hon. Harold Furchtgott-Roth, Commissioner